

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8021

INFO AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS PINT DO

SUBJ: DOMINICAN PREMIER DECLARES WAR ON EXTREMISTS

1. DOMINICA, IN RECENT MONTHS THE SCENE OF CONSIDERABLE VIOLENCE, AT LEAST SOME OF IT RACIALLY MOTIVATED, FETED SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY ITS ACCESSION TO STATEHOOD (IN ASSOCIATION WITH UK) NOVEMBER 3-5. (NATIONAL DAY IS ACTUALLY NOVEMBER 3, BUT EVENT IS OFFICIALLY CELEBRATED DURING THREE-DAY PERIOD.) HAVING BEEN INVITED BY PREMIER PATRICK JOHN TO ATTEND SERIES OF EVENTS SCHEDULED BY GOD FOR THE OCCASION, I ARRIVED IN DOMINICA EVENING NOVEMBER 2, DEPARTED EVENING NOVEMBER 5. (NO OTHER FOREIGN REPRESENTATIVE WAS PRESENT, AND APPARENTLY NO OTHER HAD BEEN INVITED.)

2. THOUGH MOST REPORTS REACHING BRIDGETOWN FROM DOMINICA IN RECENT WEEKS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT UNREST HAD DECLINED FROM ITS HIGH POINT IN THE SPRING, I FOUND THAT THE ISLAND WAS, IN FACT, VERY FAR FROM ENJOYING PEACE. EVERYONE WITH WHOM I SPOKE (ADMITTEDLY ALL MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT, BOURGEOISIE, OR POLICEMEN) INVEIGHED AGAINST SO CALLED "DREADS," YOUNG EXTREMISTS WHO SHARE AT LEAST SOME OF CHARACTERISTICS OF JAMAICA'S RASTAFAPIANS, INCLUDING WEARING OF "DREADLOCKS" (HENCE THE NAME), AND WHO

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BLAMED FOR UNREST. ON FIRST DAY OF NATIONAL CELEBRATIONS, A

CANADIAN CITIZEN, WHO HAS BEEN LIVING IN RETIREMENT IN DOMINICA, WAS ASSAULTED AT HIS HOME NEAR CAPITAL CITY OF ROUSEAU BY TWO KNIFE-WIELDING DREADS AND SUFFERED CUT IN NECK THAT VERY NEARLY COST HIM HIS LIFE. THIS EVENT INVARIABLY EVOKED UNSOLICITED COMMENT FROM MY INTERLOCUTORS WHO, AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, DEPLORED UNPROVOKED ATTACK ON WHITE FOREIGNER, BUT ALSO MADE IT APPARENT THAT THEY FELT VERY REAL FEAR FOR THEIR OWN PROPERTY AND PERSONS. SOME MEMBERS OF BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND ONE POLICEMAN ALSO CRITICIZED GOD FOR ALLOWING SITUATION TO GET OUT OF HAND. NEVERTHELESS, I ALSO HEARD SOME TALK OF "POLICE BRUTALITY" AND LEARNED THAT JULIAN JOHNSON, LEADER OF THE RADICAL MOVEMENT FOR A NEW DOMINICA BUT NOT A DREAD, HAD RECENTLY WON A CIVIL SUIT AGAINST A POLICE OFFICER WHOM HE ACCUSED OF HAVING ASSAULTED HIM.

3. IN HARD-HITTING SPEECH AT YOUTH RALLY NOVEMBER 4, PREMIER MADE STRONG ATTACK ON "TERRORISTS" WHO SOUGHT IMPOSE THEIR WILL ON MAJORITY AND DECLARED THEIR "PERVERSE AND DEGENERATE" PHILOSOPHY HAD NO PLACE IN DOMINICA AND HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD MAKE COUNTRY SAFE FOR PEACE-LOVING CITIZENS AND VISITORS. HE ALSO PROMISED THAT, WITHIN TWO WEEKS, HE WOULD INTRODUCE LEGISLATION INTO HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY WHICH WOULD GIVE GOD POWERS NEEDED TO DEAL WITH EXTREMISTS. IN PRIVATE DISCUSSION WITH ME AFTERWARDS, JOHN SAID PROPOSED LEGISLATION WOULD: (A) BRING BACK PENALTY OF FLOGGING; (B) REMOVE FROM JUDGES DISCRETION THEY NOW ENJOY WITH RESPECT TO LENGTH OF SENTENCE THAT MAY BE IMPOSED ON THOSE CONVICTED OF TERRORIST ACTIVITIES; AND (C) PROVIDE IMPROVED PRISON FACILITIES. WITH REGARD TO SECOND POINT, HE EXPLAINED THAT JUDGES TENDED TO IMPOSE MINIMUM SENTENCES PERMITTED BY LAW, SINCE THEY FEARED FOR THEIR OWN LIVES. HE ALSO TOLD ME HE INTENDED ASK JAMAICAN GOVERNMENT FOR ASSISTANCE IN REFORMING PENAL ADMINISTRATION.

4. COMMENT: CLEARLY, THERE IS A NEED FOR GOD TO TAKE FIRM ACTION AGAINST EXTREMISTS, FOR, AS LONG AS PRESENT CLIMATE OF FEAR AND TENSION PERSISTS, DOMINICA CANNOT HOPE TO MAKE ANY ECONOMIC PROGRESS. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, HOWEVER, WHETHER PROPOSED "LAW AND ORDER" MEASURES WILL BE EFFECTIVE EVEN IN DEALING WITH IMMEDIATE PROBLEM, AND GOD HAS THUS FAR GIVEN NO INDICATION OF HAVING ANY PROGRAM TO DEAL WITH ROOT CAUSES OF SOCIAL UNREST, INTER ALIA, CHRONIC UNDEREMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOY-

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